

754 great holidays or weddings. The fact that they can change their form has caused the rise of mythological explanations of whirlwinds and nightmares, and the belief in werewolves, all of which are popular among the Livonians.

Besides the evil sorcerers, there are also good ones in the Livonian mythology. The latter were originally mediators between human beings and the spirits; they were the priests and wise healers, in a word, the great benefactors and helpers of the people. Due to the persecution of the sorcerers by the Christian religion, several of the good qualities of the sorcerers have been dimmed, and only their functions as soothsayers and healers have been preserved up to the present time. There are certain sicknesses for which there is no other cure except the sorcerer's spell. Loooris states that the sorcerers possess a power in the hearts of the people which is much stronger than that of the whole church and the pastors put together.

- 782 According to the chronicle of Henricus de Lettis, the Livonians in the thirteenth century practiced the sacrifice of human beings and animals. In the course of the centuries, these sacrifices have disappeared. An evidence of the early animal sacrifices can be seen in the custom of killing certain animals at burials. More vital are, however, all kinds of material offerings which are brought, or were brought in the recent past, to various spirits. When

782 starting to build a house, it is customary to put
342 some money, sugar and liquor under the founda-
tion so that the protective spirit of the house
will eat and drink and guard the house. When
the house is finished, some white bread, liquor
and beer is put on the loft for the house spirit.
It is believed that if the people do not take care
of the house spirit, the lightning will strike and
burn the house. When sowing flax liquor is
772 poured for the flax mother. In former times
the people used to place various offerings at
the edge of the field for several field spirits,
and when they ate in the forest, they left some
food on a hill for the forest god.

Especially common are the offerings to
the sea mother and sea father. To launch a
new boat or start a voyage, the Livonians used
to pour some liquor into the sea. Liquor and
white bread are offered to the sea also on
Easter morning. When going to fish for the
first time in the spring, they pray and make
offerings; when they return, they throw a
handful of fish into the sea. Offerings are also
made during a storm and when going to swim
for the first time.

778 The Livonians formerly had holy stones
and holy trees. One such stone was to be
found in Knabenberg (Latvian, Puishkalns); the
Livonians and Latvians worshipped it and
honored it with offerings. A holy linden at
Augenmünde (seven versts from Piza village)
has been famous for centuries in all of North

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the Ignorance and Carelessness of the Country Clergy; but since by the Care of the *Swedish* Kings, a Yearly Synod has been Convocated at *Rival*, for the regulation of Church-Affairs, and Examination of the Clergy-Men; it has been found by experience, that besides their unsuitness for Devotion, by reason of the constant Fatigues they are forced to undergo, their ancient Idolatry and Superstition, has taken so deep root among them, as not to be quite extirpated by the Art of Man; for such is their Inclination for Sorcery, that they are of Opinion their Cartel cannot thrive without it; for which reason, Fathers and Mothers, among these Peasants, are as careful to instruct their Children in it, as we do in the Catechism and other good Morals. To elude the Effects of Charms, they never kill a Beast, or make a Slaughter, but they throw some part away, upon which the effect of the Charm is to fall; nay, they are so far entangled in Superstition, that if within a few Weeks after Baptism, the Child happen to fall ill, or pine away, they Re-baptize it, alledging, that the first Name was not agreeable to its Constitution, tho' very severe Laws have been enacted against it. The worst of all is, that they are so Tenacious of these Superstitions, and so obstinate in the perseverance of their ancient Customs, that nothing is able to divert them from it. Of this there have been several Instances of late Years; for these Peasants, as I told you before, being not permitted to purchase any Lands, but obliged to live upon the Allotments granted to them by their Lords, for the bare sustenance of their Families, will sometimes cut or burn down some Woods, and Manure the Ground, which produces good Wheat; this they hide for Sale; but if they happen to be catch'd, they are strip'd to the middle, and ty'd to a Post, where they are soundly whipt with a Swirch, till the Blood issues forth on all Sides; I say, there are many Instances of such among the *Livonian* Peasants, who rather than redeem this Chastisement by a small pecuniary Mulct of about 18 or 16 Pence, have chosen to submit readily to the Punishment, alledging, that rather than introduce any Novelty of this Kind, they would suffer the same Chastisement their Fore-fathers used to do before them.